

NZ Schools- Learning Support Rights & Responsibilities

A parent-friendly reference for New Zealand state schools | (September 2026)

The key principle: Students with additional learning needs have the same right to enrol, attend and receive education, and schools must monitor progress and respond to differing needs.

What schools are expected to do

- **Provide equal access.** A student with special educational needs has the same rights to enrol, attend and receive education as other students.
- **Monitor progress.** Boards must ensure student performance is monitored and evaluated, using good-quality assessment information.
- **Report clearly.** Parents must receive information about their child's performance in a timely and readily understandable form.
- **Respond to need.** Teaching and learning support should be adjusted when assessment shows a learner is not making expected progress.

Adjustments & learning support

Supports should be matched to the learner and the barrier to access. Examples may include:

- ✓ extra time for reading or writing
- ✓ shorter or chunked tasks with planned breaks
- ✓ oral + visual instructions and reduced copying demands
- ✓ assistive technology, keyboarding or text-to-speech
- ✓ accessible texts or alternative ways to demonstrate knowledge, where appropriate

Important: a formal dyslexia diagnosis is not required before a school can provide learning support.

What parents can reasonably ask

- What learning need or access barrier has been identified?
- What intervention, classroom support or accommodation is currently in place?
- What are the measurable learning goals?
- What assessment/progress data are being collected?
- When will progress be reviewed?
- What will change if the student is not making sufficient progress?

What is not automatically required

- **A specific programme.** A school is not legally required to use a specific, named literacy intervention.
- **An IEP for every learner.** IEPs/Learning Plans are recognised tools for tailored support, but are not automatic for every student with dyslexia, ADHD or another SLD.
- **Every external recommendation.** A school should consider relevant evidence, but does not have to adopt each recommendation exactly as written.

NCEA: Special Assessment Conditions

For eligible students, schools apply to NZQA for Special Assessment Conditions (SAC).

Key point: requested conditions should reflect the student's normal way of working, not appear only at exam time.

If concerns are not resolved

A practical escalation pathway is:

Teacher /→ Principal → School Board

If unresolved: contact the local Ministry of Education office or the Ombudsman.

Legal & guidance basis:

- *Education and Training Act 2020*
 - *Human Rights Act 1993*
- *Ministry of Education learning-support guidance*
- *NZQA 2026 Special Assessment Conditions rules*